

NCA  
VOC FOR PGM/FN  
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6013  
HARRY DEBELIUS/MADRID

JULY 19, 1978

## CHANGING SPAIN

ANNCR:

IN ONLY A FEW YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF GENERAL FRANCISCO FRANCO, SPAIN'S LATE DICTATOR, THE COUNTRY HAS CHANGED SHARPLY. HERE ARE SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THAT CHANGE FROM HARRY DEBELIUS IN MADRID.

VOICE:

THIS CORRESPONDENT WAS STANDING IN LINE AT A POLICE STATION HERE IN MADRID, PATIENTLY WAITING HIS TURN AT THE WINDOW FOR THE RENOVATION OF "PERMANENCIAS," OR VISAS, FOR FOREIGNERS. IT WAS JULY THE EIGHTEENTH, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILITARY UPRISING THAT KICKED OFF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR FORTY-TWO YEARS AGO AND INSTALLED THE LATE GENERAL FRANCO IN POWER FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THIS YEAR, THAT ANNIVERSARY WAS NOT A PUBLIC HOLIDAY. WITH ME IN THE LINE WAS A SOFTSPOKEN, ATTRACTIVE PERSON WEARING A DENIM SKIRT AND JACKET COMBINATION. THE PERSON ASKED THE CLERK, "I HOPE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO THE WAY I'M DRESSED?" I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT WHY ANYONE SHOULD OBJECT TO WHAT APPEARED TO ME TO BE PERFECTLY NORMAL APPAREL. "NOT AT ALL," REPLIED THE CLERK, "THIS IS A DEMOCRACY NOW." I WAS PUZZLED. THEN I JUST COULDN'T HELP LOOKING OVER THE SHOULDER OF THE QUESTIONER, AND I NOTICED THAT THE NAME WAS "LUIS RODOLFO" -- AN OBVIOUSLY MALE NAME. "I'M GLAD," SAID LUIS RODOLFO. "THERE USED TO BE SOME FUSS BECAUSE I HAPPEN TO BE TRANSSEXUAL." WELL, THAT REALLY HAPPENED. UNDER THE FRANCO REGIME SUCH THINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN UNHEARD OF.

ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO, THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, NO LESS, CALMLY INFORMED THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT THAT MORE THAN HALF OF SPAIN'S MARRIED WOMEN ARE ON THE PILL. AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT PAID FOR FORTY PERCENT OF THE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES USED IN THIS COUNTRY LAST YEAR. UNDER THE GENERALISSIMO, CONTRACEPTIVES WERE FORBIDDEN.

IT'S NOT SO LONG AGO THAT BIKINI-CLAD VACATIONERS FROM MORE NORTHERLY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CAUSED A FUROR ON SPANISH BEACHES. NOW THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TOURISM IS PLANNING TO OPEN UP BEACHES FOR NUDISTS, ALL ALONG THE SPANISH COAST. A FEW OF THEM ARE FUNCTIONING ALREADY. UNDER THE CAUDILLO (FRANCO), GAMBLING WAS BANNED, EXCEPT FOR THE STATE-RUN LOTTERY, THE STATE SUPERVISED FOOTBALL POOL, AND BETTING AT THE TRACKS. NOW, LUXURIOUS CASINOS ARE BLOSSOMING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. IT USED TO BE THAT NEWS WAS VERY TIGHTLY CENSORED. NOW TRANSISTOR RADIOS EVERYWHERE BLARE OUT THE NEWS ON THE HOUR.

SPANIARDS USED TO GO TO FRANCE FOR THE WEEKEND TO SEE RACY MOVIES, NOW EROTIC FILMS ARE SO ROUTINE IN SPAIN THAT FRENCH MEN ARE COMING HERE. THERE'S BINGO IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD, TOPLESS AND BOTTOMLESS SHOWS IN EVERY NIGHT CLUB. AND--WHAT WOULD REALLY SEND GENERAL FRANCO BACK TO HIS GRAVE, IF HE COULD RISE AGAIN-- THERE ARE COMMUNIST DELEGATES IN THE PARLIAMENT, AND THE BASQUE FLAG FLIES OVER CITY HALLS ALL OVER THE NORTH OF THE COUNTRY.

IT'S CERTAINLY A DIFFERENT SPAIN TODAY. SOME THINK IT'S BETTER. SOME THINK IT'S WORSE. BUT NOBODY DOUBTS IT'S FREER.

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WJL/RTD